



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

April 27, 2006

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Mickey's Letter Bag

Dear Senator Switalski:

As your constituent and staff of Wayne State University, I am writing today to urge you to support at least a 2% increase to Wayne State University's higher education budget appropriation.

Wayne State is a nationally ranked research university, and its acclaimed work in such fields as smart sensors, urban health care, alternative energy sources and the life sciences contributes to Michigan's economy, its intellectual capital and its reputation for innovation. With more than 200,000 alumni, 75 percent of who live and work in Michigan, Wayne State fills a vital role in the economy of southeast Michigan and the entire state.

Wayne State has a unique role in Michigan higher education. Its service as the "university of opportunity" for citizens of the seven-county southeast Michigan area is an invaluable asset. We provide a world-class education for students who otherwise might not have access to a university, and our flexible class schedules have helped upgrade the skills and advanced the careers of thousands of working men and women. Michigan's Legislature must properly fund its education gems, like Wayne State University.

Sincerely,
Nick DeNardis
Sterling Heights

*Hi Nick:
Wayne is worth at least a 2% increase. Keep up the good work.
Mickey*

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Dear Senator:

I would love to see every high school student take Geography. If one can require World History or U.S. History, why not Geography? My concern stems from this question: In what way is World History more important or more useful for students than World Geography? It would make more sense to me that since World History is inherent in World Geography (not the other way around), it is the most logical class to require. I am aware that SB 1124 passed the Senate. Unfortunately for students, this is the requirement that they face. Hopefully they can make up for the loss in college. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Sincerely,
Sandi Siemaszko
High School Social Studies Educator

Dear Sandy:

I appreciate your thoughts, but as you say, the bill is already signed into law. Many people wanted additional things included, but others wanted us to leave some flexibility so kids could follow their interests.

Mickey

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Mickey,

Did you see in the paper that Sweden is committing to be oil independent by 2020. Do you think we could do the same on a statewide level, or form a consortium with other states to commit to energy independence? I think that it would place the state at an economic advantage for the long term.

Rich Doherty
Warren

Hi Rich:

We are taking up a package of ethanol bills tomorrow and Meijer just announced today an E-85 initiative. We have some money in our 21st Century Jobs Fund aimed at alternative fuel development, so this idea has a lot of support. It can't come too soon.

Mickey

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Dear Senator Switalski,

Your arguments for not repealing the SBT two years early are persuasive, but I fear that two years from now we will be no closer to a replacement than we are today. Too often the two parties will not agree on what day it is much less on how to get important legislation approved. I hope I am wrong but I fear that I am right.

Ray Wehba
Clinton Township

You are probably right, although I think the new treasurer will propose a reform or replacement. I expect it to be revenue neutral. Unfortunately, I think people complaining about the tax just don't want to pay anything at all. That would leave me and you to make up the difference.

Mickey

Dear Honorable Senator Switalski:

I just read in the newspaper about a bill sponsored by Representative Pam Byrnes. This bill would further restrict the amount of water removed from Michigan. I understand the current law leaves it up to the bottler to determine if they took too much water out. Yeah like that's going to work! If the state continues to allow out state garbage and large companies to withdraw water, my Michigan is going to become a giant dump surrounded by some very large and deep empty holes. We could always let the landfill companies fill up the lakes with trash after they are drained dry. Please get behind this legislation and severely limit water withdrawals.

Joseph W. Frank
Roseville

I agree.
Mickey

Mickey's Blog: Gas Price Outrage

I have heard from many constituents complaining that gas prices are too high. Gas prices are pushing \$3 a gallon for regular and in some places it has exceeded even that price.

Remember the good old days when we thought \$2 a gallon was too high? I do and it wasn't that long ago.

What is the reason for this and how do we fix it?

Part of this is the oil companies which are reaping record profits and giving \$400 million bonuses to their retiring CEO. Exxon Mobil also reported a record \$36 billion in profits in 2005. There have been calls in Congress for taxing these windfall profits and redistributing it back to citizens in the form of either savings at the pump or refund checks. There is plenty of opposition to this by those who claim that profit and price caps smack of government central planning that interferes with the free market. But it is hard to argue against making Big Oil pay more when we are paying near record prices at the pump.

Governor Granholm has been promoting an online petition that would urge the President to cap excessive oil company profits. To add your name to the list of over 40,000 names click on www.michigan.gov/lowergasprices and sign the petition.

Some say we should eliminate taxes on gasoline. The feds tack on 18.4 cents in taxes per gallon, with the state adding another 19 cents plus the 6 percent sales tax. All this money goes to road repairs. And remember this is the same tax that was applied when gas was a \$1.50 a gallon. Gas is now double that and the tax hasn't changed.

Do you think the price would drop if we reduced the tax, or would oil companies just jack the price up further? Also if we reduced the tax, how would we fund road repairs? People already complain about the condition of our roads, wouldn't cutting the tax just make it worse?

So that option doesn't work really well either.

World consumption of oil is growing and oil is concentrated in politically unstable countries. It is long past time for the United States to assert its energy independence.

The solution is to promote energy efficiency and alternative fuels such as ethanol and to beat the oil companies at their own game.

We passed a package of bills last week in the Senate to promote E-85 and ethanol burning vehicles. Meijer also announced a deal last week with the state and GM to have 20 new stations carrying the 85% ethanol blend. Michigan is also investing in alternative fuels research with our 21st Century Jobs Fund, which stems from passing the tobacco securitization fund earlier this year.

Oil companies are gouging. They have us over a barrel, literally. I say we beat them by using supply and demand against them. Let's consume less, be more energy efficient and over time switch to E-85 and other alternatives which we can produce ourselves and tell the oil companies we don't need them anymore. Are you with me? Send me your suggestions on this issue and I will print them in the next issue of *The Insider*.

Alert: Be Aware of Lottery Scams

I would like to take an opportunity to warn consumers of a common type of scam that many seniors in particular have fallen victim to. Last year, two of my constituents received an unsolicited phone call from a person claiming to represent a lottery in Spain. The person told my constituents that they had won the lottery and that in order to collect their winnings, they needed to provide him with their banking and other personal information to pay for the administrative costs, taxes and other fees. Needless to say, they fell victim to this scam.

There are many variations of this common scam but I urge residents to be wary of any such unsolicited contacts for personal and banking information, either by phone, e-mail or snail mail. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Please click on http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,1607,7-164-34739_20942-80117--,00.html for more information on international lottery scams and http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,1607,7-164-34739_20942---,00.html for additional consumer alerts.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Various Times
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various

times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Since my District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

May 1 7-9 p.m. Location: Sterling Heights Public Library (40255 Dodge Park) Sterling Heights	June 5 7-9 p.m. Location: Sterling Heights Public Library (40255 Dodge Park) Sterling Heights
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Contact My Office

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